



# MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

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Cover: Northern Fulmar photographed 65 miles east of Ocean City, Md., on May 9, 1976 by Richard A. Rowlett.



## SABINE'S GULL AND ARCTIC TERNS OFF OCEAN CITY

Richard A. Rowlett

Chartered pelagic trips in search of marine birds and mammals yielded Maryland's first records of Sabine's Gull and Arctic Tern in mid-May, 1976.

An adult-plumaged Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) was observed in the vicinity of "Baltimore Canyon," 65 miles east-southeast of Ocean City at 38°9'N, 73°45'W on May 9. The thirteen observers noted the diminutive size, gray hood, pale-tipped dark bill, and boldly contrasting mantle pattern consisting of black, white, and gray triangles. The Sabine's was initially observed resting on the water and was soon flushed by a passing trawler and not seen again. Other species that we saw at the same time included 2 skuas (sp.), about 20 Northern Fulmars, a Pomarine Jaeger, about 350 Herring Gulls, and a meager scattering of Wilson's Storm Petrels and Northern Phalaropes.

On May 16, single Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) were observed 61 miles east-southeast of Ocean City at 38°10'N, 73°48'W, and 48 miles east-southeast of Ocean City at 38°11'N, 74°06'W. These birds were seen by 30 observers including Jackson Abbott and Hank Kaestner, who have had considerable experience with this species in other parts of the world. Their expertise was indeed helpful in pointing out the essential field marks while the birds were in view.

The first bird was a "fly-by," passing briefly 20 feet alongside the boat and flying steadily toward the east. Particular field marks noted included the blood-red bill, steep forehead profile, dark gray underparts contrasting with the pale area below the cap, pale gray trailing edges of the primaries as viewed from below, and the dark edgings of the outer rectrices. I was particularly struck by the contrast between the gray underparts and the very white tail, and the buoyant, very bouncy flight consisting of the shallow wingbeats, with the accent on the upbeat. The total time of this observation was 10 to 15 seconds.

The second Arctic Tern, 48 miles east-southeast of Ocean City, was studied for almost 10 minutes while it seemed to show interest in our "chumming" operations and in a concentration of marine mammals including about 30 Fin Whales (*Balaenoptera physalis*) and 300 Saddle-backed Dolphins. The same field marks were noted, as was the distinctive call.

## SABINE'S GULL AND ARCTIC TERN SIGHTINGS NEAR OCEAN CITY

Paul G. DuMont

In the early morning of May 28, 1973, while sorting through a flock of more than 150 gulls and terns feeding 200-300 yards offshore from Assateague Is., Md., I identified a Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*) in adult breeding plumage. Using 8x40 binoculars and 15-60x spotting scope, I watched the Sabine's in flight for about 4 minutes and noted the pertinent field marks before it flew south and out of sight. This is the first Maryland sighting of this species.

Steady 20-30 knot east winds had blown throughout the night. Among the shapes discernable from the Ocean City jetty at first light were gulls, gannets, and a few shearwaters. But a large concentration of birds were milling about south of the inlet, just beyond the breaking waves. They appeared to be moving down the island shoreline, so I drove to Assateague Island National Seashore and walked out to the beach.

I spotted the Sabine's in a flock of mostly Common Terns and Laughing Gulls at about 6:30 a.m. The Sabine's appeared smaller and slimmer-bodied than the Laughing Gulls and nearly as slim but shorter-bodied than the terns. In my field notes, I described the flight as erratic, veering, cutting, and bouncing. The wing beats were medium to fast and the strokes were deeper below the body than above. While gliding and soaring, the wings were often held very sharply angled at the "wrists." The wind was estimated at 20+ knots. The bird had a gray-black hood, a black bill, a wide white collar, a mid-to-light gray back, and a white lower back and tail. The dorsal outer wing (as cut diagonally from the "wrist") was dark black and strongly contrasted with a broad, white triangle in the mid-rear wing. The secondary coverts were the same gray tone as the back. The ventral body was white. Once I saw the lighter tip of the bill when it was silhouetted against a dark background. The tail shape was generally squared off, several times it appeared shallowly forked. Previously, I had seen dozens of Sabine's while on boats offshore from Washington and California in 1971 and 1972.

Another very rare bird I saw twice between 6 and 7 a.m. on May 28, 1973, was an Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) in breeding plumage. It was with a flock of a dozen Common Terns feeding virtually over the breaking waters on the Assateague Island Beach. From a viewing distance as close as 25-30 yards, I noted the head-neck was foreshortened compared to the longer lower-back-and-tail, the bill was slim and "stuck on the front of the face," and there were broad, white "windows" in the ventral outer wing margined by a thin, even, black trailing edge. Previously I had seen and photographed many Arctics on their breeding grounds, near Plymouth, Mass., in 1972. There are apparently no previous Maryland sightings and no specimen or photograph records.

## SABINE'S GULL ON CHESAPEAKE BAY

Carl W. Carlson

At 7 a.m. on May 21, 1976, Josephine Walker and I began searching for a reported Franklin's Gull (*Larus pipixcan*) along South Beach at Sandy Point State Park near the western end of the Chesapeake Bay Bridges. We were joined by Paul Leifer who said a man "photographing the dawn" had flushed the great flock of resting gulls and that only a small part of the flock had returned.

We walked to within 200 yards of a flock of some 200 Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*), mixed with perhaps 100 Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) and a scattering of the larger species. Using scopes and binoculars, we checked every bird. Since gulls were steadily coming and going, we remained and checked each new arrival. Before long, Hal Wierenga, Danny Bystrak and Dan Boone joined us briefly before moving east to check for resting gulls there.

At 7:40 a bird swooped in and landed. I checked the wing tips and called out "Franklin's!" when I saw the white spotting on the primaries. Just as the others got the bird in focus, it spread its wings and half hopped, half flew some six feet and landed again. The bird was in full sunlight and spread its wings completely. Miss Walker and I immediately realized that we had an adult Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabini*). Mr. Leifer already had a field guide open to a plate of small gulls and immediately agreed. The bird moved repeatedly, seeming to want to stay out of the reach of the Laughing Gulls. These repeated moves took it toward the water, and soon it went over the crest of the small wave-cut dune and was lost to sight. At this point Mr. Wierenga and his team returned and we all moved toward the water searching, but apparently the bird had flown away unseen. Mr. Wierenga decided to gamble and took his team to the mudflat in front of the Westinghouse Oceanic Laboratory, promising to return for us if they found either species.

Shortly after they left, our gull flew overhead, coming in from the east ("behind" us) and again landed at the end of the flock where it stood alone. Mr. Leifer and I had perfect scope views and plainly saw the yellow-tipped black bill, reddish eyering, black legs and gray-black head. This time I had a better look at the spotting on the folded wing (see below). Within four or five minutes the restless bird took flight and we kept it in view until it appeared to swoop down abruptly just beyond the Bridges. Within 15 minutes, Wierenga was back to tell us that both the Franklin's and the Sabine's were on the Westinghouse mudflat so we drove over at once, only to be told that the Sabine's had taken off and flown straight out over the Bay until lost to sight. So far as we have been able to learn, the bird was not seen again. One can only wonder if this was the same bird that Richard Rowlett's group saw miles off the Maryland Coast on May 8.

Some notes on identification may be of interest. First, the bill and legs are black with no touch of the red found in the Laughing and

Franklin's; also, the yellow bill tip is diagnostic. The head is a dark gray rather than the true black of the Laughing and Franklin's; however, in some postures the head seemed almost silvery and in others nearly black. While the tail is of course forked, this is not an overly useful or visible field mark, since it can be seen only in flight and even then is not often clearly visible. In flight, the wing and mantle pattern are extremely striking and diagnostic, since no other species has this combination of black, gray and white triangles. The six outer primaries, which are black, have white "thumbprint" spots at the tips. When the bird is at rest, these spots form a row of highly visible white "port-holes" rather uniform in size and in spacing on the folded primaries. The Franklin's Gull has a medley of spots and whitish areas owing to the different markings on the primaries, as shown in the field guides. This pattern of the Sabine's Gull is best illustrated in the small picture in the lower right of page 390 of "Water, Prey and Game Birds of North America" published by the National Geographic Society; also on page 390 is a large color photo of a Sabine's Gull that clearly shows the bill, eyering, head color and primary tips. On the beach, we used Pough's "Audubon Water Bird Guide"; this older guide tends to be forgotten nowadays and we remarked to each other that we should resume carrying it.

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## FIRST NESTING CONFIRMATION OF PURPLE GALLINULE IN MARYLAND

Robert M. Patterson

During the second year of Breeding Bird Atlas work in Prince Georges County, the Purple Gallinule, *Ionornis martinica*, was added to the list of breeding avifauna of Maryland. The breeding site was a fresh-water marsh near Upper Marlboro, located on Brown Station Rd.

The marsh itself is the former site of a sand and gravel pit, and can be located on a USGS Upper Marlboro Quadrangle map at 38°50'N, 76°46'15"W. On the 1971 photorevised edition of the map, the old gravel pit appears in purple to the east of Brown Station Rd. and west of Western Branch. The marsh is fed by a small stream draining a farmland watershed to the west and is independent of Western Branch for its water supply.

Principal vegetation in the area of the marsh frequented almost exclusively by the gallinules was Dotted Smartweed. Other important components of the vegetational scene were Arrowhead, Arrow-arum, Hibiscus and Narrow-leaved Cattail. Pondweed was common in the open water areas.

Marsh birds are frequently observed here during the May bird counts. Common Gallinule and American Coot are to be expected through the middle of May. During the 1976 season, coot were seen here into the first week of June.

On July 1, 1976, a few hours before dusk, I identified for the first time a Purple Gallinule flying about the marsh. Over a period of



about three hours a bird or birds were seen flying to or from a central point in the almost pure stand of smartweed. On one occasion, a gallinule was carrying something in its beak which appeared to be a piece of plant material several inches long. It could have been nesting material or food for young, either of which would qualify as breeding evidence under the Breeding Bird Atlas rules. However, it was apparent that stronger evidence would be required to claim a state record.

On July 2, a search party was organized which included biologists from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Walking in the marsh proved extremely difficult and the attempt was abandoned by all but myself and biologist Elwood Martin. We carefully surveyed the area, but found nothing more than a possible starting platform for a nest or, a more plausible idea based on later evidence, a resting platform built by the parents for their very young offspring. We did determine, by flushing the adults, that there were at least two adult birds present, one of which had a bright blue frontal shield; another showed just a touch of light blue in this area.

The word went out on the Voice of the Naturalist rare bird alert and by word of mouth, along with a request for birders to stay out of the marsh and to avoid the use of tape recorders. The best spot along the road was marked for the benefit of birdwatchers and an informational billboard was placed in an inconspicuous place where only birders would be likely to see it. Owing to the fact the adult birds were unusually active, periodically flying about the marsh, many birders were afforded the opportunity to observe the birds without disturbing them.

The possible nest site discovered by Elwood Martin was kept under observation from a safe distance, but it was not added to by the adults and it soon became apparent that we had not discovered a nest. However, on July 12, after hours of daily observation by many people, I was fortunate to be on hand with half a dozen birders when the two adults appeared on a small mudflat about seventy-five feet in front of us. I was remarking on the unusual behavior of the birds standing in open view and so close to us, when two downy black chicks also walked into view, unconcerned walking through and around their parent's legs.

On subsequent days, many persons had the opportunity to see the chicks for a moment or two, and there is some justification for the belief that as many as three chicks were observed at one time. In mid-August my son Bill and I visited the marsh and were quite sure we heard five gallinules calling simultaneously from different areas of the marsh. Our last visit and observation was made on August 22.

Since the 1973 breeding season, Purple Gallinules have been reported in *American Birds* from such diverse locations as Hughes Hollow near the C & O Canal, Montgomery County, Maryland; Delaware City, Delaware, near the C & D Canal; Brigantine, Bombay Hook and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuges; Lynchburg, Virginia; Brookhaven, Wading River, Mamaroneck and Quogue, N.Y.; and Monmouth County, Eatontown, Manahawkin, Spring Lake, and Paulinskill Lake, N.J. These were all considered to be

wandering birds, though a pair was found at Delaware City in the Dragon Run Marsh in 1974. No evidence of breeding was discovered that year. However, in 1975 a pair did breed at Dragon Run Marsh, raising four young, and an additional pair raised three young at Bombay Hook N.W.R. These were first state records for Delaware and the most northern nesting records for the species which, for some reason, seemed to have "skipped over" Virginia and Maryland in extending its range northward. Purple Gallinules again nested at Bombay Hook in 1976.

Several sightings of Purple Gallinules at Hughes Hollow and at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Laurel, a 1975 report of at least one bird in late spring near the confluence of Western Branch and the main stem of the Patuxent River, a specimen collected on the Patuxent River marsh in Anne Arundel County on Oct. 12, 1938, an early 1950's sighting on the lower western shore in southern Maryland and a personal observation in 1952 in a now defunct marsh along the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C. lead to the suggestion that earlier nestings in the region may have gone unnoticed. There is also a turn-of-the-century report of a Purple Gallinule found "on the market" in Washington during the era of market hunting of almost all forms of birdlife.

Perhaps the most interesting observation about the first Maryland confirmation of nesting by this species is that it occurred in a marsh that vegetated itself naturally, without the aid of man, after the land had been laid waste by mining activities. This marsh is about 20 acres in size and is almost totally within the ownership of the county government. It is among the several areas in the county that will soon be recommended for inclusion in a county-wide wildlife sanctuary plan under legislation to be proposed by the Prince Georges Audubon Society.

The Breeding Bird Atlas project for Prince Georges County has identified 130 species of birds found during the breeding season. Over 100 species have been confirmed as actually breeding. Some interesting confirmations include Willow Flycatcher, Summer Tanager, Warbling Vireo and Spotted Sandpiper. The first nesting record of Cliff Swallow in the Atlantic Coastal Plain of Maryland occurred in 1975 under a bridge over Western Branch at U.S. Route 301. However, no evidence was found of the species at this location in 1976, perhaps because of construction activity within a few feet of the bridge during the entire nesting season. Cooper's Hawk nesting was also confirmed in the Western Branch watershed and a large number of Wood Duck fledglings contribute to making this area of Prince Georges County one of the most productive habitats for birdlife in the region.

12601 Buckingham Drive, Bowie 20715

● WANTED: VULTURE NEST SITES ●

A study of the breeding behavior and biology of Turkey and Black Vultures is being conducted by the Appalachian Environmental Laboratory. Locations of vulture nest sites will be greatly appreciated. Contact Dr. James Mosher or Michael Delaney, AEL, Gunter Hall, Frostburg, Md.



## MARYLAND'S FIRST FRANKLIN'S GULLS

Harold L. Wierenga

Between May 11 and May 30, 1976, at least seven different Franklin's Gulls (*Larus pipixcan*) appeared among a large spring gathering of gulls at Sandy Point State Park in Anne Arundel County. The sightings constituted Maryland's first records of this western species. The Franklin's Gull breeds in the northern Great Plains and typically migrates through the prairie states to and from its winter range along southern coasts from Texas to Chile. Several photographs were obtained to corroborate the sightings, and the birds were clearly observed by nearly 100 birders during their twenty-day stay near Sandy Point.

The seven gulls included representatives of three distinct age groups, or molt stages, which greatly facilitated the separation and counting of different individuals. Two birds were adults in full breeding plumage, with black hoods, thick white eye-rings, white tips to the black primaries, and large white areas on the wings separating the black primaries from the gray mantle. Two others were in near-adult plumage and differed from the two above only in that their hoods were speckled (not solid black) and their eye-rings were undeveloped and indistinct. The other three birds were immatures with essentially adult wing patterns, but instead of having black hoods, their heads were mostly white with a gray smudge in the rear.

I first saw one of the full adults flying in off the water late in the day on May 11. Early the next morning, Mark Hoffman and I found one again and studied it closely at rest on the beach among Laughing Gulls (*L. atricilla*) for about a half hour before it flew away out over the bay. A second full adult was seen back on the beach late that evening, and fortunately, both were present for most of the next morning, May 13, and put on a fine show for about 30 other observers who had flocked to the site. One or the other of the full adults was then seen daily through May 17, but not thereafter.

On May 18, the three immatures arrived, and they were joined on the 20th by the two near-adults. For a while on May 20, all five were on the beach simultaneously. On May 21, two of the immatures and one near-adult were seen; on the 22nd, there was one of each; and on the 23rd, only one of the immatures. Warm, sunny weather for the next five days brought crowds of people to the park, which in turn kept the gulls away; but the rainy Memorial Day weekend yielded an immature on May 29 and 30, the last time the species was seen.

Picking Franklin's Gulls out of the flocks of very similar Laughing Gulls became an interesting and challenging sport during this period. With this unusual opportunity for direct comparison, it soon became easier. The shorter legs of Franklin's made them seem even smaller, standing next to Laughing, than they actually are. Franklin's shorter, thinner bill and higher, steeper forehead gave their heads a discernably

different shape, and the white eye-ring in the full adults was much broader than in Laughing. The Franklin's larger white wing patch was also noticeable at rest, but the large white spots on the wing tips, much larger than those of Laughing Gulls in the spring, were probably the best and most conspicuous field mark separating the two species when standing.

In flight, the smaller Franklin's had a lighter, more buoyant wing-beat which was more reminiscent of Bonaparte's Gulls (*L. philadelphia*) than of Laughing, and the white wing patches were very conspicuous in good light. And finally, the flight call of Franklin's, a shrill "wee'-a-wee," or "wee'-a," was much higher pitched than the calls of the Laughing Gulls and was very distinctive even amid the impressive racket generated by thousands of gulls calling simultaneously after having just been flushed en masse by an unleashed Irish Setter.

On only one occasion did I observe any feeding activity by the Franklin's Gulls. During strong NW winds on May 18, one of them was seen out over the bay with a flock of Laughing Gulls, hovering into the wind and periodically swooping down to snatch some tidbit from the choppy surface. It devoured each morsel while resting on the water, and then repeated the process over and over.

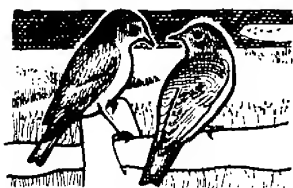
The occurrence of small numbers of migrating Franklin's Gulls in Maryland has been anticipated for some time in view of the smattering of records from other East Coast states both to our north and south. In fact, the species has become rather regular in recent years at certain favored locations along the eastern Great Lakes, and future Maryland records of this species can be expected.

The mass of gulls around Sandy Point built up from about 2,000 on April 22 to a peak of about 8,000 on May 1, and then dissipated by early June. In addition to the Franklin's Gulls, other unusual gulls identified at Sandy Point this spring included a 2nd-year Glaucous (*L. hyperboreus*) on April 25; at least three different Icelanders (*L. glaucoides*) in May (a 1st-year bird on May 1 and May 10, a 2nd-year bird on the 21st, and a near-adult on the 13th); a near-adult Lesser Black-backed (*L. fuscus*) on May 1 and May 14; and for the "pièce de résistance," a spectacular adult Sabine's (*L. sabini*) in full breeding plumage (gaudy black, white and gray triangular wing patches, noticeably notched white tail, gray hood with a narrow black border at the base, and yellow-tipped black bill) seen only on May 21 by the six lucky observers present. Since this spring build-up of gulls at Sandy Point is an annual occurrence, the flock obviously deserves careful and regular scrutiny in future years.

1216 Tyler Avenue, Annapolis 21403

● BIBLIOGRAPHY ON MARTINS IN PREPARATION ●

Authors of papers dealing solely or partly with martins (*Progne* sp.) are invited to send abstracts or reprints to Charles R. Brown, Box 1309, Austin College, Sherman, Texas 75090.



## THE SEASON

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, 1976

*Chandler S. Robbins*

The early fall months averaged about 2° cooler than usual. Rainfall was above normal in July, but insufficient to replenish the depleted soil moisture. During August the severe drought area of Virginia and North Carolina crept northward into Maryland and New Jersey despite coastal rains from Hurricane Belle on Aug. 9 and tropical storm Dottie on Aug. 21. The drought was finally broken by a slow-moving coastal storm that brought soaking rains of 5 to 6 inches to the Bay area in a 2-day period, Sept. 15-16.

The few extraordinarily early landbird migrants recorded in Maryland this fall were most likely the result of abnormally cold July and August weather in New York and Pennsylvania. Freezing temperatures were recorded in upstate New York and northern New England in early August; and in parts of Pennsylvania the summer of 1976 was the coldest on record.

Cold fronts passed eastward or southeastward over Maryland on the following dates: July 1, 9, 12, 17, and 24; August 1, 15, 24, and 29; and September 5, 10, 21, 24, and 27.

The earliest fall arrival dates for each reporting county are shown in Table 1, with the counties arranged from northwest to southeast. Underscored dates in the table refer to banded birds studied in the hand, whereas underscored dates in the text indicate record-early or record-late occurrences for the State of Maryland or one of its six ecological Sections (Eastern Shore, Western Shore, Upper Chesapeake, Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, and Allegheny Mountain) as shown in the centerfold map in the Field List of Birds of Maryland. A zero (0) means that no observation was reported from the county, whereas a dash (--) indicates that the species was found, but no arrival date is available.

For birds that are summer residents, early fall arrival dates may be hard to detect. Most frequently such arrivals are reported from banding stations where an influx of new birds is readily noticed; other ways in which they may be detected are by identifying calls of nocturnal migrants, seeing birds actively migrating overhead in the early morning, or finding birds entirely out of their normal habitat, such as in the inner city or in concentrations on islands or at the edge of tidewater.

Table 1. Earliest Fall Arrival Dates, 1976

Species	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Harf	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	LES
	10-yr	1976																
Pied-billed Grebe	--	9/14	10/29	9/ 5	9/11	0	8/18	0	0	9/16	9/22	9/ 5	--	10/24	10/ 8	0	--	8/11
Double-cr. Cormorant	--	9/11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8/16	0	9/28	0	9/11	9/27	8/ 1
Little Blue Heron	--	8/11	0	0	0	8/15	7/28	0	0	0	0	7/23	8/11	8/20	0	--	--	--
Great Egret	--	8/11	0	0	0	8/15	7/30	0	8/14	0	0	6/14	8/11	7/22	8/20	--	--	8/11
Snowy Egret	--	--	0	0	0	0	7/30	0	0	0	0	7/18	0	7/22	0	--	--	--
Cattle Egret	--	8/12	0	0	0	0	9/ 3	0	0	0	0	7/18	7/23	9/19	0	0	0	8/12
Canada Goose	9/26	9/21	--	8/ 7	9/21	10/ 3	9/19	9/25	9/28	10/ 3	9/21	9/20	10/ 2	8/30	9/19	9/25	9/11	8/29
Snow Goose	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10/ 3	0	0	0	9/25	0	9/25	9/24	--
Gadwall	--	9/26	0	10/ 2	0	0	8/29	0	0	0	0	9/26	0	10/ 5	0	0	9/27	9/11
Common Pintail	--	--	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	--	9/16	0	8/30	0	9/12	--	9/11
Blue-winged Teal	--	8/29	8/28	0	10/ 2	0	8/22	0	0	--	8/ 8	8/14	0	8/30	0	0	9/27	9/11
Green-winged Teal	--	9/ 5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8/17	8/24	0	8/30	10/10	9/25	--	9/11
American Wigeon	--	9/ 8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9/ 4	9/ 2	0	8/30	0	10/ 3	9/27	9/11
Northern Shoveler	--	9/20	0	0	0	11/14	9/13	0	0	0	9/ 9	0	0	8/30	0	10/11	9/27	0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	--	9/21	--	--	--	--	9/13	--	9/13	9/12	9/22	8/26	9/21	9/11	9/23	9/25	9/26	10/ 2
Cooper's Hawk	--	9/15	--	--	--	--	9/11	--	--	--	10/ 3	8/29	0	9/15	0	10/11	0	0
Broad-winged Hawk	9/12	9/16	7/28	9/19	--	--	8/30	9/25	9/12	--	9/20	7/30	7/12	9/16	0	9/25	9/26	--
Northern Harrier	--	9/13	--	--	--	--	9/ 9	--	--	--	--	9/13	0	9/ 6	--	10/11	--	10/ 2
Osprey	--	--	--	--	--	--	8/29	--	9/12	--	--	8/29	--	9/20	--	--	--	--
American Kestrel	--	8/10	7/ 1	7/12	--	--	9/13	--	9/25	--	8/26	7/18	9/23	--	--	7/18	--	8/10
American Coot	--	10/ 2	--	0	10/ 2	0	9/30	--	0	--	9/27	9/25	11/28	10/ 5	9/27	--	--	--
Semipalmated Plover	--	8/ 4	8/17	7/10	0	0	8/21	8/24	8/ 4	0	0	7/30	0	7/19	0	9/25	--	7/14
Lesser Golden Plover	--	9/ 3	0	9/18	0	0	8/30	0	0	0	9/11	9/ 3	0	0	0	0	0	8/24
Greater Yellowlegs	8/10	7/28	8/28	9/11	7/28	9/ 3	7/26	0	0	0	7/25	7/ 7	0	8/22	0	0	--	6/27
Lesser Yellowlegs	8/12	7/ 9	8/29	0	0	7/ 2	7/25	0	0	0	7/ 9	7/ 6	0	8/22	0	--	7/ 4	7/ 7
Solitary Sandpiper	8/ 5	7/24	7/30	9/11	0	7/ 2	7/26	0	0	0	7/14	7/17	0	7/22	0	0	0	0
Spotted Sandpiper	7/26	7/18	8/29	--	8/15	--	7/29	--	--	--	7/ 7	7/ 6	0	--	--	--	--	7/ 4
Common Snipe	--	9/ 3	8/28	--	--	--	9/ 5	0	0	--	9/ 1	8/21	--	8/14	--	10/ 3	9/27	9/11
Short-billed Dowitcher	--	7/14	8/28	0	0	0	7/26	0	0	0	7/23	6/26	0	0	0	0	7/ 4	7/ 4
Semipalmated Sandpiper	--	7/31	8/28	8/ 7	0	0	7/26	8/24	0	0	7/31	7/18	0	7/19	0	--	9/11	7/14
Least Sandpiper	8/30	7/19	8/28	8/ 7	0	0	7/26	0	0	0	7/12	7/ 4	8/11	7/19	0	0	7/ 4	7/14
Pectoral Sandpiper	8/10	8/ 3	7/30	9/18	0	0	8/ 7	8/24	0	0	7/17	7/11	0	0	0	--	9/11	7/22
Caspian Tern	--	8/10	0	0	0	0	8/28	0	0	0	0	7/22	--	0	0	9/12	7/ 4	8/10
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	9/ 7	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9/11	9/ 2	8/28	--	9/ 2	--	--	--	--	--
Common Nighthawk	8/22	8/17	8/23	8/25	--	--	8/14	0	8/19	8/23	8/13	8/ 5	--	--	7/28	--	--	8/17
Common Flicker	9/18	9/ 8	--	--	--	--	9/ 2	--	9/13	9/14	9/ 4	--	9/16	--	--	--	--	8/30
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	9/25	9/29	--	9/22	9/25	10/ 2	10/ 7	0	9/24	9/29	9/29	9/24	10/11	9/23	10/ 5	10/11	--	10/ 2
Eastern Kingbird	--	8/25	--	--	8/16	--	--	--	9/ 8	--	8/28	8/14	8/31	--	8/25	--	--	8/10
Eastern Phoebe	9/26	9/26	--	9/25	--	--	9/22	--	9/13	9/27	--	9/28	10/ 2	9/23	--	9/25	10/10	10/ 2
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	9/ 1	8/25	0	--	0	0	8/22	8/25	9/12	8/18	9/ 4	8/26	0	8/20	0	0	0	0
Trail's Flycatcher	--	9/ 4	--	9/12	--	--	--	--	--	9/ 4	8/20	0	0	8/20	0	9/12	0	0
Least Flycatcher	8/31	9/11	--	9/11	0	0	8/21	0	0	8/31	8/28	9/11	--	9/12	0	9/11	0	0
Eastern Pewee	--	9/14	--	--	--	--	--	--	9/18	9/13	--	--	9/14	9/ 6	9/24	--	--	--
Olive-sided Flycatcher	--	9/ 2	0	0	0	0	8/30	9/ 4	8/29	9/12	0	9/11	0	8/25	0	0	0	0
Tree Swallow	8/30	8/ 5	--	0	--	0	8/21	8/29	0	9/12	--	7/ 7	7/17	7/29	--	7/31	--	8/10
Bank Swallow	--	8/ 6	0	0	0	8/15	8/ 7	0	0	0	--	6/27	8/ 5	--	0	7/24	0	8/10

Species	Median		Garr	Alle	Wash	Fred	Balt	Harf	Howd	Mont	Pr.G	Anne	Calv	Kent	Caro	Talb	Dorc	LES
	10-yr	1976																
Rough-winged Swallow	--	8/10	7/ 1	--	--	--	--	--	--	9/12	7/19	6/26	--	9/22	--	8/22	--	8/10
Blue Jay	9/20	9/23	--	--	--	--	9/23	--	--	9/17	9/23	9/23	--	9/14	9/28	--	--	--
White-breasted Nuthatch	--	9/13	--	11/ 7	--	--	--	--	8/ 3	--	8/18	--	9/22	9/13	--	0	--	--
Red-breasted Nuthatch	9/20	9/12	0	0	9/24	0	9/13	0	9/ 7	8/31	10/ 2	9/11	10/ 4	9/ 7	9/ 4	9/12	10/10	0
Winter Wren	10/ 2	9/27	--	9/25	--	--	9/24	--	9/23	10/ 4	9/27	9/27	10/29	9/25	--	10/ 3	--	--
Wood Thrush	--	9/11	9/ 3	9/11	--	--	--	--	9/11	9/ 5	9/ 5	--	--	9/14	--	--	--	9/12
Swaynson's Thrush	9/ 8	9/10	9/ 3	9/ 8	0	9/15	8/21	9/25	9/ 7	8/18	8/29	9/ 6	9/20	9/11	9/18	9/12	0	9/21
Gray-cheeked Thrush	9/15	9/22	9/ 3	9/19	0	0	9/25	9/ 1	9/25	9/12	9/24	9/11	0	9/19	10/ 6	9/25	0	10/ 1
Veery	9/ 4	9/ 5	9/ 3	9/19	0	--	8/21	--	9/ 5	8/23	8/31	8/29	--	9/ 5	9/ 6	9/ 5	0	0
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	9/24	9/24	9/20	9/25	9/ 8	10/ 6	9/15	9/25	9/26	9/23	9/23	9/ 6	10/ 4	9/24	9/22	9/12	9/27	10/ 2
Cedar Waxwing	9/ 2	9/ 8	8/29	--	8/16	--	9/30	--	9/24	9/ 6	8/30	9/11	9/ 6	9/19	--	9/11	--	--
White-eyed Vireo	--	9/ 6	0	9/11	--	9/ 6	--	9/ 1	--	8/20	9/19	--	9/ 6	9/ 5	--	--	--	--
Solitary Vireo	10/ 1	9/26	9/22	10/10	0	--	9/29	0	9/20	9/20	9/29	9/24	0	9/26	0	0	0	10/10
Red-eyed Vireo	--	9/ 2	--	--	--	--	--	8/18	9/ 5	8/31	9/ 4	9/ 6	9/ 2	8/20	--	--	--	--
Philadelphia Vireo	--	9/21	9/21	9/22	0	0	9/ 7	0	9/19	9/25	9/22	9/11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Black-and-white Warbler	8/28	8/30	--	9/12	8/15	8/ 7	8/24	9/18	8/ 1	8/28	8/31	8/18	--	9/11	9/ 4	9/ 5	--	--
Blue-winged Warbler	--	9/ 2	0	0	--	--	9/ 9	--	9/ 2	9/ 4	8/22	8/24	0	--	0	0	0	0
Tennessee Warbler	9/10	9/ 2	9/ 5	9/12	0	0	8/30	0	8/27	8/28	8/31	8/30	0	9/ 5	9/21	9/11	0	0
Nashville Warbler	9/12	9/ 7	9/13	9/ 7	9/ 8	0	8/30	0	9/ 2	8/31	9/ 8	8/30	0	9/ 6	9/22	9/11	0	0
Northern Parula Warbler	9/16	9/12	--	--	--	--	9/ 9	--	9/14	9/18	9/ 1	9/11	--	9/25	9/22	9/11	--	--
Yellow Warbler	9/ 2	--	--	--	--	--	7/19	--	0	--	0	7/14	0	0	9/22	8/22	0	--
Magnolia Warbler	9/ 4	9/ 6	9/ 5	9/11	9/12	9/ 5	8/17	9/24	9/ 1	8/28	8/31	8/24	9/ 9	9/ 6	9/13	9/11	0	0
Cape May Warbler	9/14	9/ 8	9/12	9/ 7	0	9/10	9/ 7	0	9/ 6	9/25	8/22	9/ 4	9/22	9/ 5	10/ 6	9/11	0	0
Black-thr. Blue Warbler	9/ 7	9/ 7	9/ 5	9/11	0	0	9/ 8	8/25	8/27	8/30	9/ 7	8/26	9/18	9/ 6	9/22	9/25	0	9/21
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9/30	9/21	10/11	10/15	--	--	10/ 4	--	9/30	9/21	9/20	9/19	9/23	9/ 6	9/12	9/11	--	9/21
Black-thr. Green Warbler	9/12	9/10	9/14	9/12	9/12	9/10	9/ 7	0	9/ 6	8/31	9/ 9	9/ 4	9/15	9/ 6	0	9/11	0	0
Blackburnian Warbler	9/ 5	8/30	9/22	9/12	8/22	8/22	8/30	0	9/ 1	8/31	8/26	8/24	0	9/ 6	0	0	0	0
Chestnut-sided Warbler	9/ 4	9/ 5	9/14	9/12	8/22	9/10	8/30	0	9/ 9	8/30	9/ 1	8/26	0	9/12	0	0	0	0
Bay-breasted Warbler	9/16	9/ 4	9/20	9/11	8/22	0	8/29	0	9/ 9	9/ 3	8/31	8/29	0	9/ 5	9/22	0	0	0
Blackpoll Warbler	9/15	9/11	9/21	9/12	0	0	9/ 9	0	9/25	9/ 5	9/ 3	9/ 6	9/13	9/ 6	10/ 6	9/11	0	--
Palm Warbler	9/22	9/25	0	0	0	0	9/25	0	9/ 6	10/17	9/ 8	9/ 5	9/12	10/12	0	10/ 1	10/10	--
Ovenbird	8/31	9/ 6	--	9/11	--	--	8/30	8/18	9/ 1	8/18	8/21	9/ 7	9/10	9/ 6	9/12	9/11	--	9/11
Northern Waterthrush	9/ 1	8/25	--	0	0	0	8/25	0	0	8/15	8/ 5	7/26	0	9/ 6	9/14	9/11	0	0
Connecticut Warbler	9/12	9/12	9/14	9/12	0	0	0	0	9/ 6	9/ 7	9/20	9/18	0	0	0	9/12	0	0
Mourning Warbler	--	9/11	9/18	9/11	0	0	8/30	0	0	9/ 9	0	9/11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hooded Warbler	--	9/ 7	--	9/19	--	--	0	--	--	9/ 7	8/21	9/ 6	--	10/12	0	--	0	--
Wilson's Warbler	9/ 8	9/ 6	0	9/11	0	0	8/26	0	0	8/18	9/11	8/30	0	9/ 6	0	9/11	0	0
Canada Warbler	8/23	8/28	--	0	8/22	8/22	8/30	9/ 1	9/ 5	8/16	8/22	8/26	0	9/ 6	9/21	0	0	0
American Redstart	8/30	8/22	9/ 7	9/11	--	--	8/15	8/25	8/21	8/22	8/12	8/16	9/19	8/20	9/ 3	8/21	--	9/11
Bobolink	8/29	8/28	9/ 2	0	0	0	8/28	0	0	--	8/27	7/11	8/24	8/30	8/28	9/ 5	0	8/21
Northern Oriole	8/28	8/26	--	--	8/16	--	8/24	--	9/ 1	8/30	8/22	7/28	--	--	9/ 9	8/22	0	0
Scarlet Tanager	--	9/ 9	9/20	9/12	9/ 8	--	9/ 9	--	9/12	9/ 7	8/22	9/ 6	8/29	9/ 7	9/ 9	9/11	--	--
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/12	9/10	9/15	9/12	0	9/15	9/ 8	0	9/ 1	8/30	9/ 6	9/ 6	9/20	9/19	9/ 4	9/12	0	0
Indigo Bunting	--	9/12	--	9/11	--	--	--	--	9/ 5	9/14	--	8/29	9/24	9/24	--	--	--	--
Savannah Sparrow	9/30	--	--	0	0	--	0	0	--	--	--	8/30	0	--	--	--	--	--
White-throated Sparrow	9/25	10/ 1	9/22	9/30	10/ 7	10/ 7	9/28	10/ 6	9/25	9/19	9/28	9/28	10/ 5	9/25	10/ 2	10/10	10/ 2	10/ 2
Lincoln's Sparrow	--	9/16	9/22	9/19	0	0	9/14	0	0	9/ 7	0	0	0	10/11	0	9/12	0	0

December 1976

MARYLAND BIRDLIFE

The principal contributors to Table 1, by counties, are as follows: Garrett County--Mrs. Fran Pope, John Willetts, Mrs. Dorothea Malec, Kendrick Hodgdon; Alleghany--John Willetts, James Paulus, Dorothea Malec; Washington--Daniel Boone, Robert and Mary Keedy, Mrs. Alice Mallonee; Frederick--Dr. John Richards; Baltimore City and County--Bob Ringler, Rick Blom, Jim Stasz, Eddie Boyd, Steve Hardiman, Mike Resch, Martin Brazeau, Peter Knight, John Trochet, Joe Schreiber; Harford--John Wortman, Chuck Graham, Joe Schreiber; Howard--Mrs. Joanne Solem, Mrs. Dorothy Rauth, David Holmes, Paul Zucker; Montgomery--Mrs. Margaret Donnalld, Nancy and Lucy MacClintock, Dr. John Weske, Robert Warfield; Prince Georges--Sam Droege, Chandler Robbins, Danny Bystrak, Daniel Boone, Paul Nistico; Anne Arundel--Hal Wierenga, Mark Hoffman, Danny Bystrak, Joe Schreiber, Scott Mele, Harold Wierenga, Paul DuMont, George Robbins; Calvert--John Fales; Kent--Mrs. Dorothy Mendinhall, Floyd Parks; Caroline--Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fletcher, Mrs. Ethel Engle, Marvin Hewitt, M. Nuttle; Talbot--Henry Armistead, Jan Reese; Dorchester--Henry Armistead; Lower Eastern Shore (Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester Counties)--Henry Armistead, Charles and Gail Vaughn, Charles Hills, Paul DuMont.

Loons and Grebes. Two very early Common Loons were found on the lower Gunpowder River on Aug. 28 by Bob Ringler and others; since these birds were in breeding plumage they are assumed to be recent arrivals from the north rather than subadult non-breeding vagrants. The next arrivals were 3 at Sandy Point State Park on Sept. 10 (Hal Wierenga). Pied-billed Grebes seen at Deal Island on Aug. 11 (Charles Hills) and in Baltimore County on Aug. 18 (Ringler and others) occurred at the beginning of their normal migration period; no evidence of breeding had been found in those areas this summer.

Fulmar, Shearwaters and Petrels. Richard Rowlett had Maryland's first August observation of a Greater Shearwater off Ocean City on the 14th. Rowlett organized and conducted two very productive pelagic trips to Baltimore Canyon, 60 miles east of Ocean City in September. On Sept. 3 he estimated 425 Wilson's Storm Petrels, 7 Cory's Shearwaters, and one each of Greater and Audubon's Shearwater, almost all of these being over the Canyon. These are the first September records for the Greater and Audubon's Shearwaters in Maryland waters. On Sept. 26 departure records were broken for the Wilson's Storm Petrel (about 400 birds from 70 to 80 miles east of Ocean City) and Audubon's Shearwater (3 birds 42 miles east-southeast of Ocean City); and a record-early Northern Fulmar (light phase) was encountered 36 miles east-southeast of Ocean City.

Hérons and Ibis. Henry Armistead continued his population studies of herons breeding on islands of lower Chesapeake Bay in Dorchester and Somerset Counties and Dr. Mitchell Byrd made aerial counts of these and other colonies. On Holland Island in extreme southern Dorchester County Armistead and James Freeman found an unusual variety of nesting species on July 3, with no one species preponderant; the 330 pairs were distributed among the following species: 60 Snowy Egrets, 55 Little Blue Herons, 45 Black-crowned Night Herons, 45 Glossy Ibis, 40 Cattle Egrets, 35 Yellow-crowned Night Herons, 25 Great Egrets, 15 Great Blue Herons, 5 Green Herons, and 5 Louisiana Herons. Post-breeding wandering took



most of the above species to the various Eastern Shore counties, but west of the Bay the distribution of southern herons in the late summer months was restricted primarily to tidewater areas such as Sandy Point State Park. Great Egrets ranged as far west as Oldtown (4 by Paulus on Oct. 2) and Lilypons (Ringler); Little Blue Heron reached Lilypons, Aug. 15 (Ringler); and a Yellow-crowned Night Heron was at Emmitsburg, Sept. 9 (Richards). A Glossy Ibis on both the Baltimore and Carroll County sides of Liberty Reservoir on Aug. 21 was a rarity for that location (Ringler, Jim Stasz and Rick Blom), and 14 Cattle Egrets on the Carroll County side of the same reservoir on Sept. 3 (William Hull) were unusual for that inland county.

Geese and Ducks. Most of the August reports of Canada Geese can be dismissed as being wandering birds from the semi-tame Patuxent flock or from Blackwater Refuge. A single bird that appeared at Oldtown on Aug. 7 (Paulus) is still to be explained, but probably is not a valid fall migrant. A Fulvous Tree Duck was reported from Deal Island Wildlife Management Area on Sept. 11 (Paul DuMont) as part of a major influx of waterfowl containing about 1,000 American Wigeon and 300 Blue-winged Teal. On June 12 Armistead found a nest with 10 Gadwall eggs at Deal Island WMA, and on June 27 he counted 119 Gadwalls there, including a female with 8 young. He and James Freeman flushed a female Gadwall from a thick growth of beach grass at Hoopers Island on July 3, but were unable to find the nest that would have confirmed a modest northwestward extension of the breeding range of this species in Maryland. Two Ruddy Ducks were found at Deal Island WMA on June 12 by Armistead and Charles Vaughn, but there was no sign of nesting. Early arrivals included Snow Goose at Blackwater Refuge on Sept. 24 (Refuge personnel), Gadwall in Baltimore County on Aug. 29 (Ringler and others), Blue-winged Teal at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center on Aug. 8 (Bystrak) and at Sandy Point State Park on Aug. 14 (Mark Hoffman), American Wigeon and Northern Shoveler in Kent County on Aug. 30 (Floyd Parks), and a flock of 15 Black Scoters at Ocean City on Sept. 5 (Robert Warfield). A drake Surf Scoter at Sandy Point on July 18 was out of season (Wierenga).

Hawks. Osprey populations in the lower Chesapeake were comparable with the past 5 or 6 years according to Harry Armistead and James Freeman, who counted 23 active nests on Bloodsworth Island, 3 in the Bishops Head area, 1 on Northeast Island, 2 on Spring Island, 5 on Holland Island, and 3 on Adam Island, all on July 3. Northern Harriers are more widely distributed in summer in the marsh country of the Eastern Shore than most of us had realized. Two or more individuals were seen this summer by Armistead at Blackwater Refuge, the Wingate area, the Elliott Island marshes, and the Deal Island and Fairmount Game Management Areas, by Hal Wierenga 2 miles northeast of Stevensville, and by Chan Robbins at Irish Grove Wildlife Sanctuary southeast of Marion. At least two species of hawks had begun their fall migration by July. A group of 2 adult and 3 young American Kestrels seen on July 1 on the Snaggy Mountain Road in Garrett County were listed by Fran Pope as fall arrivals; she also watched a cluster of at least 9 on July 12 above Frostburg. The first American Kestrel arrived at Bellevue in Talbot County on July 18 (Armistead). On the same day, one appeared at Sandy Point State Park, circled upward, and continued in a southeasterly direction across Chesapeake Bay, assisted by

10-15 m.p.h. northwesterly winds (Hal Wierenga). Under similar conditions 2 more kestrels arrived at Sandy Point on July 30, together with a very early Broad-winged Hawk that circled up out of sight. Again on Aug. 1, with cool 15-20 m.p.h. northwest winds, 4 kestrels and a Broad-wing headed southeast over Sandy Point (Hal Wierenga). A Merlin, the first of 9 for the season, reached Sandy Point State Park on northeast winds on Aug. 2, breaking the State arrival date by four days (Prof. Harold and Hal Wierenga, Mark Hoffman and Scott Mele). Other August arrival dates for raptors at Sandy Point were Aug. 26 for Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Aug. 29 for Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Osprey (Hal Wierenga). The best Broad-winged Hawk flights reported were of 1,429 birds over Marion Glass' home in Towson on Sept. 13 (Jim Stasz, Marion Glass, Barbara Ross, Peter Knight and Ringler), 188 over Oldtown in 15 minutes on Sept. 19 (Paulus), 350 over the Mt. Washington section of Baltimore in 15 minutes on Sept. 22 (Jackie Gratz), and 100 over Bellevue on Sept. 29 (Liz Armistead).

Rails and Gallinules. For the second time in three years Black Rails nested at Sandy Point State Park, where Hal Wierenga and Bill Bouton saw and heard both adults and at least 3 chicks no more than a week old on July 7. See page 110 of this issue for Bob Patterson's account of the first known nesting of the Purple Gallinule in Maryland.

Oystercatchers, Stilts and Avocets. Single American Oystercatchers were observed on Bloodsworth Island on July 3 (Armistead and Freeman) and on Barren Island (first record there) on July 4 (Armistead), and there were 3 individuals on Hoopers Island on July 3 (Armistead and Freeman). An early State record for the Black-necked Stilt at Hills Point in Dorchester County on Apr. 10 was reported by Larry Hindman (Maryland Wildlife Administration) and Ed Schaubert. An American Avocet was discovered at Sandy Point State Park on Aug. 25 by Mark Hoffman.

Plovers. A single Semipalmated Plover at the Mountain Lake sewerage lagoons on Aug. 17 was a good find for Garrett County (Fran Pope). The chronology of Lesser Golden Plover reports was as follows: 2 on Aug. 14 off Ocean City (Rowlett); 1 on Aug. 30 and Sept. 5 in Carroll County at Liberty Lake (first county record--Rick Blom); 22 on Sept. 3 at Sandy Point State Park (Hal Wierenga); 3 on Sept. 11 at the Fairwood Turf Farm along US 50 near Bowie and 9 on the same day at the Princeton Turf Farm near Centreville (Paul DuMont); 5 on Sept. 18 at the Rouge Lagoon near Oldtown (Paulus); and 15 on Sept. 25 at Sandy Point (Wierenga). No reports were received from the coast.

Godwits and Curlews. Godwits were featured in two of the fall reports: 2 Hudsonian Godwits at Assateague Island on Aug. 12 (Mark Hoffman and Scott Mele), and a Marbled Godwit in Talbot County near Oxford on Sept. 8 (Jan Reese). The first Whimbrel was seen at West Ocean City on July 8 (Warfield), and the peak count was of 277 birds on Assateague Island on July 22 (Hoffman). Farther inland there were single birds at Sandy Point State Park on July 23, Aug. 7, Aug. 29, and Sept. 15 (Hal Wierenga and others), and the fourth Talbot County record, at Bellevue on Sept. 25 (Harry Armistead).

Medium-sized long-legged Sandpipers. Upland Sandpipers were noted only in Kent County, Aug. 4 (Dorothy Mendinhall), in Baltimore County, Aug. 21 to Sept. 5 (Blom, Steve Sapperstein), at Summit Hall Turf Farm (8 birds) on Aug. 22 (Rowlett), and at Sandy Point, Sept. 2 (Wierenga). Earliest arrivals of transients of the other species were June 27 for Greater Yellowlegs at Deal Island and July 4 for Lesser Yellowlegs at Blackwater Refuge (Armistead); July 2 for Solitary Sandpiper and for Lesser Yellowlegs at Lilypons (Mark Hoffman); July 4 for Willet at West Ocean City (Warfield); and June 27 for Spotted Sandpiper at Sandy Point State Park (Hoffman). Charles Hills found no Willets at Irish Grove Sanctuary on Aug. 12, suggesting that the breeding birds may all have left by that time; Hoffman had a peak of 646 at Assateague, July 22.

Turnstones, Phalaropes, Snipe and Dowitchers. Ruddy Turnstones did not arrive at Assateague Is. until July 22 (Hoffman). At Sandy Point turnstones were seen in twos on six dates from Aug. 9 to Sept. 16 (Wierenga). The only Wilson's Phalarope was observed at Sandy Point on Aug. 14 (Wierenga). There was a Northern Phalarope there on Sept. 25; and 12 Northern and 3 Red Phalaropes were counted by Rowlett and party off Ocean City on Sept. 26. The first Red was encountered at Ocean City on Aug. 14 (Rowlett), and 40 Reds seen 45 to 50 miles off Ocean City on Sept. 3 by Rowlett's pelagic party were early for that big a concentration. Early Common Snipe were found in Kent County on Aug. 14 (Floyd Parks) and at Sandy Point State Park on Aug. 21 (Danny Bystrak). Early dowitcher dates were June 26 at Sandy Point for the Short-billed (Wierenga) and Aug. 11 at Deal Island for the Long-billed (Charles Hills).

Genus Calidris (Knots and Peeps). Most of these birds are not found in enough counties to warrant including them in Table 1, so the first two arrival dates for each species are mentioned here: 24 Red Knots were at Assateague on July 22 (Hoffman), 1 at Sandy Pt., Sept. 16; Sanderlings turned up first at Sandy Point (July 22, Wierenga) and Ocean City (July 27, Warfield); Semipalmated Sandpipers were seen first at Sandy Point on July 11 (Hoffman) and next on July 19 in Kent County (Dorothy Mendinhall); the first 3 Western Sandpipers were at Sandy Point on July 22 (Wierenga), though the next locality did not detect them until Aug. 24 (Harford County, John Wortman and Chuck Graham); Least Sandpipers reached Maryland as early as July 4 (Blackwater Refuge by Armistead and Sandy Point by Hoffman); White-rumped reached Liberty Reservoir in the Baltimore Piedmont (Sept. 4, Ringler and others) and Deal Island (Sept. 11, DuMont) before they were reported from Sandy Point or the coast; Baird's was detected in the Baltimore Piedmont on Sept. 6 (Blom, Eddie Boyd) and at Sandy Point on July 25 (Hoffman), Sept. 20 and 25 (Wierenga); Wierenga tied the early arrival date of the Pectoral Sandpiper July 11 at Sandy Point, and the next arrival was on July 17 at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Bystrak); the only site reporting Dunlin before the end of the period was Sandy Point, where the population jumped from a single bird on Sept. 24 to 28 individuals six days later (Wierenga). No unusually large numbers were recorded.

Stilt and Buff-breasted Sandpipers and Ruff. Stilt Sandpiper was seen at Sandy Point, July 9 (Hoffman) to Sept. 16, with peaks of 7 on

Aug. 16 and 6 on Aug. 28 (Wierenga). The only Buff-breasted Sandpipers reported were 2 at the Fairwood Turf Farm on U.S. 50 near Bowie on Sept. 11 (DuMont). A Ruff, the first of its kind for Sandy Point, was studied there on July 6 by Mark Hoffman. The Ruff, Long-billed Dowitcher and Northern Phalarope raised the Sandy Point State Park shorebird list to a fantastic 37 species.

Jaegers and Gulls. Rowlett's pelagic trips yielded 5 Parasitic Jaegers on Sept. 3, 25 to 30 miles off Ocean City, and 8 Pomarine Jaegers on Sept. 26. Summering populations of Greater Black-backed and Herring Gulls continue to increase in the lower Bay. On July 3-4, Armistead and Freeman counted flocks totaling 82 Greater Black-backs and 360 Herrings at Bloodsworth, Holland and Barren Islands. Two pairs of Herrings circled anxiously over the observers on Holland Island, strongly suggesting that they have expanded their nesting range into Dorchester County--but no nest or young could be found. Fall arrival dates for other species were: Ring-billed Gull at West Ocean City on July 25 (Warfield) and at Bellevue on July 31 (Armistead); Bonaparte's Gull at Sandy Point on Aug. 24 (Wierenga); and an immature Black-legged Kittiwake 70 miles east of Ocean City on the very early date of Sept. 26 (Rowlett and others). As many as 275 Greater Black-backs gathered at Sandy Point on Sept. 16 (Wierenga).

Terns and Skimmers. The Least Tern situation at Sandy Point State Park is typical of the fate of most of the remnant colonies on the mainland shores. On the morning of July 4 the colony contained 3 clutches of 2 eggs each and a brood of 3 chicks, but by the end of that day of heavy park use not a trace of the colony remained. On the same day Armistead estimated 100 nesting pairs on Barren Island; in a quick search he actually located 46 nests with eggs and also found 6 downy young and 15 flying young. It is quite likely that the continued existence of breeding Least Terns around Chesapeake Bay is dependent upon the few large healthy colonies in relatively undisturbed locations such as Barren Island. The earliest arrival dates for terns were as follows: Maryland's second Bridled Tern (a subadult, photographed) about 26 miles east-southeast of Ocean City on Sept. 26 (Rowlett); 2 Royal Terns at Bloodsworth Island on July 3 and 6 at Barren Island the next day (Armistead); 2 Royals at Sandy Point on Sept. 2 (Wierenga); 2 Sandwich Terns on the beach at Assateague Island following Hurricane Belle on Aug. 10-12 (Hills, Ringler, Hoffman); 2 Caspian Terns at Barren Island on July 4 (Armistead) and 1 at Sandy Point on July 22 (Wierenga); and a Black Tern at Holland Island on July 3 (Armistead and Freeman) and an immature at Sandy Point on July 23 (Wierenga). High counts of interest included 165 Forster's Terns and 480 Common Terns flying north past Sandy Point on Aug. 10, the day after Hurricane Belle swept past the mouth of the Bay (Wierenga); 58 Least Terns (including 14 juveniles raised elsewhere) at Sandy Point on July 23 (Wierenga); 94 Royal Terns and 21 Caspian Terns at Hills Point on Sept. 27, both record counts for Dorchester County (Armistead). A Black Skimmer was at Sandy Point, Aug. 10 and Aug. 14-16, followed by 3 on Aug. 19-21 and Sept. 16 (Wierenga).

Cuckoos, Parakeets. Black-billed Cuckoos were first spotted at Coastal Plain and Piedmont locations on Aug. 6 at the Patuxent Wildlife

Research Center (Bystrak), Aug. 11 at Denton (Roberta Fletcher), Sept. 5 in Howard County (Bob and Mary Keedy), and on Sept. 13 in Baltimore County (Bob Ringler and others). Perhaps the last survivor of the Maryland population of Monk Parakeets was seen flying about the Plum Point area in August (John Fales).

Kingfishers, Woodpeckers. A migrating Belted Kingfisher circled upward to several hundred feet over Sandy Point and then headed east across the Bay on the early date of Aug. 14 and another bird followed the same route on the next day (Wierenga). If this sounds too early for kingfisher migration see last year's account (*Md. Birdlife* 31:145-146) of a bird arriving at Ocean City after a cold front on Aug. 8, 1975. A wandering Red-headed Woodpecker turned up at Bellevue on July 31 (Liz Armistead), the first summer record there. Red-headeds nested again this year at Blackwater Refuge (Guy Willey).

Flycatchers. Eastern Kingbirds were migrating by Aug. 10 in Somerset County (Hills), and reached a peak on Aug. 14 (60 birds) and Aug. 15 (105 birds) at Sandy Point State Park (Mark Hoffman). Only along the Bay or the coast are large numbers encountered in autumn. A Western Kingbird at Denton broke the State arrival record on Aug. 25 (O. Smith). A Great Crested Flycatcher at Mountain Lake Park on Sept. 25 was late for Garrett County (Fran Pope). No fewer than 44 Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were banded in Maryland this fall; they were spread over a long period, from Aug. 18 (2 at Adventure near Potomac by Margaret Donald and crew) to Oct. 3 (also at Adventure). No one day was outstanding, but 1 or 2 birds were caught there almost daily from Aug. 24 to Sept. 10. Traill's and Least Flycatchers peaked at the same time as the Yellow-bellies, but in much smaller numbers.

Swallows. All of the earliest swallow arrivals were recorded at Sandy Point by Hal Wierenga: 10 Tree Swallows on July 7, 2 Banks on June 26, 1 Rough-winged on June 26, 50 Barns and 25 Purple Martins on July 1, and 3 Cliffs on July 18. Peak counts there were 1,500 Banks on Aug. 24 and 2,000 Trees on both Sept. 30 and Oct. 3. The highest tally of Rough-wings was in Worcester County on Aug. 10 (Charles Hills). A Purple Martin roost near College Park held an estimated 3,000 birds on Aug. 12 (Richard White). Late Purple Martins were seen at both Bellevue and Sandy Point on Sept. 25, and 5 Bank Swallows at the latter site on Sept. 30 broke the State record by one day (Wierenga).

Jays, Nuthatches. For the second consecutive year Blue Jays were migrating past Sandy Point in July. The numbers were not as spectacular as the 175 birds Wierenga counted on July 2, 1975 (*Md. Birdlife* 31:121), but his 14 birds on July 7, 1976 broke the State departure date. Red-breasted Nuthatches were found in a majority of Maryland counties, but in only small numbers; only 5 were banded at Damsite, and none at all at Adventure. The first arrived at Plummers Island on Aug. 31 (Rowlett).

Thrushes. Although the thrush migration was normal in most respects, there was an interesting scattering of exceptionally early individuals.



First was a Swainson's Thrush banded and photographed at Adventure on Aug. 18, breaking the State arrival record (Margaret Donnalld). This was followed by another early Swainson's in Baltimore on Aug. 21 (Rose Gerringer). Next was a Gray-cheeked Thrush banded at the tum Suden Sanctuary near Benson in Harford County on Sept. 1 by Joe Schreiber. And finally, a Hermit Thrush was banded at Damsite on Sept. 12 by Dorothy Mendinhal. In each case more than a dozen days elapsed before another individual was found at the same station. The Veery reached its peak at Damsite on Sept. 5 and at Adventure during the period Aug. 31 through Sept. 8. Swainson's Thrushes were banded daily at Adventure from Sept. 7 through Oct. 11, with a maximum of 37 individuals on Sept. 25, and Gray-cheeks were banded there daily from Sept. 19 through Oct. 11 with a maximum of 9 on Oct. 1. Note that the Swainson's peak coincided with the two best nocturnal chip counts of thrushes: 100 birds estimated over Annapolis just before dawn (Wierenga) and an estimated 300 over Bellevue (Armistead), all on Sept. 25. Hal Wierenga's second-best count was of 50 thrushes on the evening of Sept. 22, a day that was tied for second place at Adventure, with 25 Swainson's Thrushes banded. I suggest that this close agreement between nocturnal calls and daily banding records is largely coincidental, but it would be interesting to organize a series of standardized nocturnal counts to see how well they do agree with banding records.

Pipits, Shrikes. The earliest Water Pipits of the season were single birds at Oldtown on Sept. 18 (Jim Paulus) and at Sandy Point on Sept. 23 (George Robbins). As one would expect in a declining population, Loggerhead Shrikes were late in being detected, as well as in poor numbers. There were no August reports, and the only sightings were in Anne Arundel, Kent, and Dorchester Counties. The earliest date was Sept. 6 (Floyd Parks).

Vireos. September 25 was a late date for the White-eyed Vireo in Garrett County (Fran Pope). Philadelphia Vireos were unusually scarce, with no more than 2 birds found in any one county and no more than two on any one date. Single Warbling Vireos were seen in Baltimore County on Sept. 13 and Sept. 22 (Ringler and others) and banded at Adventure on Sept. 16 (the peak day for Red-eyed Vireos there). Rick Blom established some sort of a record by attracting all six vireo species by means of a Screech Owl tape at Phoenix on Sept. 22.

Warblers. The banding stations had a good steady run of warblers from Aug. 19 through September, punctuated by heavy flights on Aug. 31, Sept. 6, 9-10, 13-14, 20-21, and 25, generally following cold fronts. Spruce forest warblers, notably the Tennessee, Cape May and Bay-breasted, continued to occur in exceptionally high numbers. At Damsite, for example, 36 Tennessees were banded on Sept. 6, setting a record count for the Eastern Shore, and comprising nearly half of the 76 warblers banded that day by Mrs. Mendinhal and crew. Her commonest warbler on Sept. 20 was the Cape May, with 18 individuals, while the Bay-breasted was in second place with 12! The Tennessee and Bay-breasted peaked on these very same days at Adventure also, but not in such spectacular numbers. September totals at Damsite showed the Tennessee and Cape May as the two



commonest warblers for the month, followed by Black-throated Blue and Ovenbird, all with more than 50 individuals banded. At Adventure the ranking was quite different: Ovenbird, Magnolia, American Redstart, Tennessee and Canada, with 46 or more of each. At Pleasant Valley in Garrett County, Tennessee led the list with 92 birds, Magnolia was a poor second with 28, and Cape May was third with 15 (Dorothea Malec and crew). With no banding station operating regularly in early August, and only Adventure running on a daily basis during the last half of August, the early part of the warbler migration was poorly sampled and relatively few unusually early dates were obtained. Those of special interest were: Black-and-white Warbler on Aug. 1 at Highland in Howard County (Dorothy Rauth); Orange-crowned Warbler on Sept. 24 in Druid Hill Park in Baltimore (Peggy Bohanan); Tennessee Warbler in four counties in August, with the earliest on Aug. 27 at Highland (Mrs. Rauth); Yellow Warbler on July 14 at Sandy Point State Park (Wierenga), missing the State arrival date by two days; Cape May Warbler male on Aug. 22 at Laurel (Chan Robbins), tying the State arrival record; Bay-breasted Warbler on Aug. 22 in Washington County (Ringler, Peter Knight, Jim Stasz); Black-poll Warbler on Sept. 3 at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Danny Bystrak); Palm Warbler on Sept. 5 at Sandy Point (Wierenga); Northern Waterthrush on July 26 at Fort Meade (Bystrak); and Wilson's Warbler banded on Aug. 18 at Adventure (Margaret Donald).

Blackbirds. The first 2 Bobolinks reached Sandy Point State Park on the early date of July 11, and a male still in breeding plumage was there on July 18 (Hal Wierenga). Hal's peak Bobolink tally at Sandy Point was 1,300 birds on Sept. 3. Bob Patterson reported that during the period Sept. 11 to Sept. 25 about 1,000 Bobolinks fed in the lush vegetation growing on a sludge entrenching site in South Bowie. It would pay to keep an eye on other sludge sites, as these may be some of the hot birding spots of the future. A Yellow-headed Blackbird believed to be an adult female was seen north of Stockton on Aug. 10 and a detailed description submitted by Charles Hills. This is the first August record for Maryland.

Finches and Sparrows. Very few House Finches were reported. There were 2 males in West Oldtown on July 22, but no evidence of breeding (Jim Paulus). About 8 summered at the Wierengas' Annapolis feeder, but the adults brought no young to the feeder as they had done in 1975. The first evidence of fall arrivals was on Sept. 8 when the flock suddenly increased to 55. The earliest Purple Finch arrival was on Sept. 14 at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center (Bystrak). Henslow's Sparrows have been notably scarce in Maryland in the past few years, except along the Elliott Island road, where Hal Wierenga had a maximum count of 9 birds on July 9. The only other bird reported this summer was a singing male in an old hayfield near Oldtown at the C & O Canal Hiker-Biker milepost number 169 (Paulus). Since migrating sparrows are very scarce, even at banding stations, prior to mid-September, few birders make a point of searching for them in appropriate habitat until the peak of the warbler migration has passed. Bear in mind, however, that Lark Sparrows have twice reached the Maryland coastal plain in July and that marsh sparrows are on the move as early as the latter half of August. At

Sandy Point State Park, where nothing escapes the watchful eye of Hal Wierenga, the first transient Seaside Sparrow arrived on Aug. 14 and there was a high tally of 7 birds on Sept. 10. He detected migrant Sharp-tailed Sparrows on Aug. 26, and 2 were in evidence on Sept. 10. A third species of sparrow, the Savannah, turned up there on Aug. 30. Since the Savannah, and especially the Sharp-tail, could be subspecifically identified in the hand by comparison with a series of museum skins, it would be desirable to net some of the August birds and determine their origin. The Sharp-tails, for example, may be coming from the coastal marshes of New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada; or they may be overland migrants from the prairies or from James Bay. They could even be post-breeding wanderers from marshes farther down Chesapeake Bay, and not true migrants at all!

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## MALE SONG SPARROW ROOSTS IN ABANDONED MOCKINGBIRD NEST

Hervey Brackbill

A nest that I watched in Larchmont, Baltimore County, in 1962 was begun by Northern Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) but abandoned; it was then at once adopted as a sleeping place by a male Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) but abandoned by him, too, when his mate's nest 35 yards away came to grief; and finally, after three days more, it was adapted and used by American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*).

Neither abandonment of a nest before eggs have been laid, nor use of one species' abandoned nest by a different species, is very unusual. But because male Song Sparrows are not accustomed to sit in a nest--they take no part in nest-building or incubation--it was surprising to see one choose a nest for roosting.

The nest was 6 feet up in an arbor vitae standing against the wall of a house. Besides watching it by day, I checked it by flashlight after dark from April 21 through May 2. Mockingbirds worked upon it on April 21, 22, and 23. A robin also visited it on the 23rd. And that night I found the Song Sparrow sleeping in it. Again on the 25th I found the Song Sparrow there. On the 24th and 26th I did not, but well before the ensuing sunrises I heard him give his awakening song close to the nest's position. On the 27th, however, the nest in which his mate was incubating eggs was molested, and both these nests were given up. On April 30 a robin was working on the arbor vitae nest, and on May 2 began laying there.

The Song Sparrow, incidentally, slept facing straight outward from the house wall, not with his head turned back and bill buried in the scapulars. A Carolina Chickadee (*Parus carolinensis*) incubating in one of my next boxes, which I looked in upon on two nights, was also sleeping with head straight forward.

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## BIRDING FOR SPARROWS IN OCTOBER

*Carl W. Carlson and Josephine Walker*

For some years we have talked of a "sparrow blitz" in which we would make several field trips in mid-October and give (almost!) exclusive attention to sparrows. On October 7, 1976 we were at Seneca Creek and the C&O Canal at dawn, and soon saw White-throated, Lincoln's, Swamp and Song Sparrows. After noting the scarcity of other birds, we decided to go sparrow hunting.

Next we did Sycamore Landing Road (between River Road and the Canal). Just south of River Road and along the first (north) half of Sycamore Landing Road is a huge field, much of which seems to be too wet too often for real cropping. The field is part of the McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area; as such it is planted in part by the State with strips of crops that produce wildlife food. In the fall these 30-foot wide strips with the smaller types of seeds are alive with sparrows and other seed-eaters. The strips begin beside Sycamore Landing Road. We drove south slowly to scout the field, then turned and drove very slowly north with the sun behind us. We crept up to one spot where we had seen considerable activity and stopped quietly, causing no visible disturbance. Watching from inside the car, we soon saw Field Sparrows, many Dark-eyed Juncos, and no end of Savannah Sparrows.

We were about 25 feet from a small tangle of dead brush in the strip, and several birds flew up in succession to perch on a long whip-like branch, look about and then drop back into the seedrows. One such bird paused to preen and so gave us a prolonged view during which we were able to see all body areas as the bird twisted about. Almost together we exclaimed, "Bachman's!" and double-checked the bird point-by-point in our field guides. The close view, perfect light and composure of the bird allowed a detailed examination such as one cannot hope for of this elusive species. Briefly, the bird met all tests and was a Bachman's Sparrow; a full report is given below. Before we left we also saw one Chipping Sparrow and several Vespers.

Next we drove north on Willard Road and turned in on the Izaak Walton Road to check the roadside hedges where we had more juncos and White-throats. By now it was lunch time (about 11:15) so we parked in a likely place and began lunch. While eating in the car, we heard a great number of birds in the brushy borders beside us which were hung with heavy growths of honeysuckle. Soon one bird, seemingly about 30 feet off, began singing. We both noticed it since it had a White-throat voice but was singing a "wrong" song. After listening a few minutes, we decided it might well be a Harris' Sparrow since the song consisted of two or sometimes three long notes, on the same key in a given rendition, but not the same key in all renditions. We checked the field guides for the field marks while we spished and drew the bird quite close to the car. Apparently it moved to where it could see us, and when we moved in the car, it flew up and around behind the car and

crossed the road. Miss Walker then slipped out of the car, found the bird in a blackberry tangle, and had good views of it at 20 to 25 feet before it left. She had the field marks in mind and was able to see the primary marks well enough to justify the identification as an immature Harris' Sparrow; details are given below.

On October 12, 1976, we drove to Bombay Hook N.W.R. where we found an immature Lark Sparrow and two Sharp-tailed Sparrows.

On October 15 we returned to the Hughes Hollow area. Now the migration of sparrows seemed at a maximum. Along Sycamore Landing Road and Willard Road were great flocks of Savannahs and more White-crowned Sparrows than we had ever seen locally. We tried to check out each bird, tedious though this became, hoping for another species; finally one flew up and perched on a post beside Willard Road: Grasshopper Sparrow! Farther on, we worked a long multiflora rose hedge and got a Fox Sparrow. Continuing along the hedge, we saw a small bird fly up and perch on a low branch. The bird was "round"-looking with a stubby tail. The underparts, throat and face were a pale orange-brown rather like the belly of a Carolina Wren. The breast was unspotted and unstreaked. The back appeared scaly and more brown-and-white than tan. The crown was dark with a rather evident center stripe of pale orange-brown, bringing thoughts of the Baird's. We took elaborate notes and hurried to the car where the guides showed that it was an immature Henslow's Sparrow, a plumage neither of us had before encountered. Comparison of the pictures of this species with those of the Grasshopper Sparrow is most interesting (see page 308 of Robbins' "Birds of North America").

Other commitments prevented further trips, so we had to tally up our score and quit. The "Field List of the Birds of Maryland" lists 20 full species of sparrows, exclusive of Accidentals--the Ipswich and Oregon Junco having been demoted. Of these we saw 17 (15 in Maryland and 2 in Delaware). We missed the Seaside Sparrow (pure oversight since we were in the Little Creek area); the American Tree Sparrow (probably too early; first date in Field List is October 18), and the very rare Clay-colored. The "appendices" below contain full notes on our Bachman's and Harris' sightings.

#### Appendix A

##### Bachman's Sparrow (*Aimophila aestivalis bachmani*)

The bird was seen in perfect light with the full sun behind us; it was perched at about eye-level within 25 feet. It remained perched and preened steadily for nearly five minutes, turning and twisting to provide good views of all parts of the body. It made no sound. It flew back into the weedy tangle when a car passed on River Road about 1/3 mile away.

The most notable feature was the lack of obvious markings. The breast was an unmarked dingy somewhat buffy gray and unlike the clean gray of the Chipping and Field Sparrows; the upper breast near the throat was appreciably buffier than the lower underparts. The tail seemed long in proportion to body size, and was definitely rounded at the end. The mantle was generally a reddish brown, but with considerable

stripings of gray with some black markings. Primaries and tail seemed very dark, almost black. In what I took to be the tertial area, the feathers were notably a brighter, redder brown. The throat was close to the less buffy color of the lower breast and belly, but appeared somewhat paler. In the submalar area we could see a trace of poorly defined, faint dusky streak.

The face was generally the same gray as the throat, but appeared a somewhat "cleaner" gray. The eye-stripe was dark/dusky, rather than black, and poorly defined; it looked like the eye-stripe of a Chipping Sparrow might look if it were mostly erased. We could see no trace of this mark between eye and bill. There was no dark edging of the cheek area. The eye-stripe seemed to blend into the gray superciliary area (or "stripe") which in turn seemed to blend into the lower edge of the brown cap, so that the facial pattern was minimal. The crown was a very dark brown without striping.

The bill was of a generous size and larger than that of a Field Sparrow in comparison to the head. The upper mandible was definitely darkish and had the convex or "Roman Nose" look we noted in studying the Green Ridge (Md.) colony in the mid-1960's. The lower mandible was distinctly much lighter.

The bird was seen in a field crowded with migrant flocks of other species of sparrows (e.g., Savannah, Field, and Vesper). The field is near Poolesville, Md. and lies south of River Road and west of Sycamore Landing Road. Several visits by ourselves and others to the field over the next week proved fruitless.

On the basis of the field marks, we submit that the bird was as Eastern Bachman's Sparrow (*A. a. bachmani*). Bent's volume on Finches (U.S. National Museum Bull. 237, pp. 956-972) contains what seems the best available discussion of the three subspecies.

C. W. C.

#### Appendix B

##### Harris' Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

An immature heard and seen on Izaak Walton Road, Montgomery County, Md. on October 7, 1976. We heard the bird for some time in the shrubbery near the car. It caught our attention because it was so like a White-throat's voice, but it certainly was not singing the White-throat's song. Although it occasionally sang two or three short notes, the typical song consisted of two or three long whistled notes; these were usually on the same key, but sometimes, to my ear, the last note differed somewhat. The voice was very minor and wavered noticeably at times. Later we checked the F.O.N. record of finch songs and found that the last of the three birds of this species given on the record sounded just as we remembered our bird's song and voice.

When we spished, it worked closer but stopped singing. When one of us moved, it changed perches, dove back into the honeysuckle, and then came out and flew across the road behind the car and into a blackberry thicket. I slipped out and stalked it carefully, keeping a cedar between me and the bird. When I was about 25 feet from the blackberry bush, I slowly edged out. The bird was low in the thicket, but hopped upward from branch to branch until it was near the bush top. Here it paused for about a minute, then saw me and flew off to the nearby woods.

We had just looked at the guides so I had a good idea of what to look for. First, it was large for a sparrow and it was obviously a sparrow. It had a black bib made up of a solid cluster of black spots merged into a "collar" at the base of the throat. From this very short lines of black spots ran down the white breast. The bill was large, very pink and very noticeable. The face was reddish brown with no real markings. The crown was about the color of the face but it was sprinkled with little black specks too small to call spots; they did not seem to form stripes.

We agreed that the bird was an immature Harris' Sparrow by reason of the black bib, large size and big pink bill. The immature on page 321 of Robbins' "Birds of North America" looks very like our bird; the crown in particular looks "right."

Although we hunted the area for a half-hour and returned several times, we did not see or hear it again.

J. W.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

## RECENT BOOKS BY MOS MEMBERS

## BIRDS AND MARSHES OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COUNTRY

Brooke Meanley. 1975. Tidewater Publishers, Cambridge, Md. 157 pp., 98 figs. \$5.00 (paper).

In this well-illustrated volume the author relates many of his experiences exploring Maryland's tidewater country during his career as a wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The emphasis is on specialty species--those that elude the casual birder.

Mr. Meanley, who is the only person to have found the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in three Maryland counties, gives hints on where to seek it. He brings back memories of the Pocomoke Swamp's Swainson's Warbler, a species he knows better than anyone else. He has chapters on the Elliott Island Black Rails; the Coastal Plain race of the Swamp Sparrow, first described from the Nanticoke River marshes; King Rails, Bald Eagles, Ospreys, and of course the waterfowl for which the Chesapeake is famous. There are references to many of your MOS friends. The final photo is of the Annapolis Snowy Owl by Hal Wierenga. Once you start reading this book you won't want to put it down. C.S.R.

## A FIELD GUIDE TO MEXICAN BIRDS

Roger Tory Peterson and Edward L. Chalif. 1973. Houghton Mifflin, Boston. 298 pp., 48 colored plates. \$8.95.

This book is a must for anyone birding in South Texas, Mexico, or nearby Central American countries. Of the 1,038 species treated, those found in the Eastern, Western or Texas Peterson guides are discussed only briefly, and the reader is referred by means of the letters E, W, and T to the U.S. guides that provide full treatment. In this way, major emphasis is given to the Latin American species, nearly all of which are illustrated in color, as are some North American species for comparison.

In common with the other recent Mexican guides, the plates are grouped together in the center (or back) of the book, and there are no maps. The typical Peterson format of Field marks, Similar species, Voice, and Range is followed. English names are up-to-date, and old or alternate names are cross-referenced to facilitate comparison with other Mexican and North American guides.

If I were to take only one guide on a trip to Mexico it would surely be Peterson, because of the superb plates, pocket size, and comparison with similar species. If I could take two books, the second would be Davis, for its more detailed treatment of voice. For the Mexican states of Sonora, Sinaloa and Nayarit I would take Alden, for his directions on where to go. And if I had any room left in my knapsack I would tuck in Edwards for its greater detail on habitat and habits, and the older Mexican bible, Blake, which has more detailed descriptions but lacks colored plates.

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Davis, L. 1972. Field Guide to Birds of Mex & C.Am. U. Tex. 282p, 48 pl.  
Edwards, Ernest P. 1972. Field Guide to Birds of Mexico. Priv.pub.300p, 24pl  
C.S.R.



## THE BLUEBIRD: HOW YOU CAN HELP ITS FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

Lawrence Zeleny. 1976. Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington. 170 pp., 33 figs., 7 col. plates. \$7.95.

Dr. Zeleny, Past President of MOS and Chairman of our Bluebird Committee, is widely known in North America for his research on bluebird nesting and nest box design and for his campaign to promote public participation in helping bluebird populations to increase.

This book gives an authoritative account of the behavior of bluebirds and causes of their decline, and gives detailed instructions for affirmative action on behalf of bluebirds. A short list of references follows each chapter, and there is also a 7-page Bibliography and an Index. All conservation-minded persons should read this book. If you don't have suitable bluebird habitat yourself, you probably can help a friend who does.

C.S.R.

## POTOMAC: THE NATION'S RIVER

Frank Graham, Jr. Photographs by Edward Schell. 1976. Lippincott, Philadelphia and New York. 128 pp., 61 pp. color photos. \$15.95.

With text by Graham and vivid color photos by Schell, the reader is led up the Potomac from mouth to source. Human history along the river is traced and the reader is left awed by the spectacular natural beauties that still can be enjoyed close to the nation's hub.

If you wish to increase your enjoyment of the every-day natural sights around you, study the beauty of Ed Schell's waterfalls, wet rocks, spring flowers, fall splendor, dead leaves, half-frozen creeks, and native wildlife.

C.S.R.



## LARK SPARROW IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

*Jon Ghiselin*

On August 18, 1976, I observed a Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*) at Old Colony Cove in Rose Haven, 1 km east of Holland Point, Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The white-cornered tail distinctive of the species was clearly visible as the bird flew. The sparrow was flushed from cordgrass (*Spartina* sp.) and a low bur, possibly *Franseria acanthicarpa*, on a rocky breakwater. The breakwater projects into Chesapeake Bay from the east side of Rose Haven Harbor. The northeasterly wind was sharp, and few people were on the nearby beach at mid-afternoon.

There is a previous occurrence of a transient Lark Sparrow in Anne Arundel County on a similar date: August 22, 1948 at Sandy Point by E. G. Davis (*Wood Thrush* 4:24). The other county record of this species concerns a pair discovered on nesting territory at Fort Meade, May 29 to June 10, 1972, by Morgan Jones (*Md. Birdlife* 28:117). This species should be watched for, especially in fall, in sparse vegetation along the Bay shore.

## M. O. S. RESEARCH GRANTS

The Maryland Ornithological Society announces the availability of one-year grants for research conducted within the state of Maryland. Ornithological research anywhere within the state, or ecological studies at one of the M.O.S. sanctuaries is permissible. Individual grants of not more than \$250 each will be awarded on a competitive basis to applicants sending proposals not later than January 15, 1978 to Mr. Charles Vaughn, Chairman, M.O.S. Research Committee, 1306 Frederick Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21801. Applicants will be notified not later than April 1, 1978. Further information may be obtained from Mr. Vaughn.

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